

January 22, 2007

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 1.22.07  
HB 258

To the House Committee on Taxation:

My name is Tyler Evilsizer. I am on the Board of Directors of the S.A.V.E. Foundation (Student Advocates for Valuing the Environment) Foundation, a Helena-area non-profit focusing on recycling and conservation as a way to reduce waste generation.

I am testifying in favor of HB 258 as a realistic and efficient way to deal with electronic waste (e-waste) generation, which Montana Department of Environment Quality and the EPA has identified as one of the newest challenges to solid waste management.

E-Waste is a problem. Our society has become an electronic one, relying on computers, televisions, monitors and a host of other machines. This new technological development is not addressed by current solid waste management techniques. It is estimated that three quarters of all computer equipment ever manufactured is sitting in basements, garages, and storage units throughout the country.


The problems in dealing with the new large amount of e-waste are compounded by the nature of electronics: complex circuitry made up of hundreds of chemicals, many of which are toxic. For example, a computer monitor contains 4 to 8 pounds of lead. Circuitry contains heavy metals, while even the plastics used are coated with carcinogenic flame-retardants. Electronics must be processed in order to safely handle all the chemicals. Reprocessing also allows many of the materials to be reused in other products, diverting them from landfills and putting them back into the economy.

E-Waste is a new problem of solid waste management. Several other states have adopted plans to address electronics. In California, this is accomplished by adding a fee to every new electronic device purchased, which funds the state recycling program. In New England states, such as Maine, e-waste has been banned from landfills. These programs have significant administrative costs and present a nuisance to individuals.

The e-waste solution proposed by HB 258 is much cleaner. Instead of a large government program, creating an e-waste tax-credit encourages individuals to use the existing infrastructure to deal with e-waste, and encouraging growth in Montana's recycling industry. Tatooine Electronic Systems, Inc., in Billings is one company that currently takes e-waste, but at a price of \$10-\$15 per piece of equipment. Paying \$30-\$45 dollars to recycle a computer, monitor, and printer discourages people from responsibly disposing of electronics. The tax credit offered by HB 258 is an incentive for individuals and businesses, without creating the hefty administrative rules and guidelines adopted by other states to address e-waste.

E-Waste presents a new challenge in solid waste. HB 258 offers a clean, efficient incentive to deal with electronic waste.

Sincerely,

  
Tyler Evilsizer,  
Board of Directors  
The S.A.V.E. Foundation